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### **Abstract**

The efforts of our past use and present leaders in winding down the gruff activities of the dreaded Boko haram have met with zero results. Every four years, leaders from different political parties have used it to campaign, promising they will subdue the activities of the dangerous Islamic sect. However, all the promises have resulted in cheap lies and cloud chasing. It is disruptive, demoralising, disconcerting and disorienting that the billions of naira used in purchasing foreign sophisticated weapons have not forced out the anti-people from our natal land. Since this method has failed woefully, the research explored indigenous knowledge as an alternative to foreign methods of fighting the group. Many researchers have written on the subject matter, but quite a number of them have not chronologically delineated the importance of spiritual, indigenous and cultural ways of fighting the menace. This is the focus of the research. Primary and secondary sources were used to elicit information. The research found that the use of foreign weapons has failed, and the prayers of the adherents of foreign religions have seated comfortably on the fence of the wuss, hence the need to return to our roots. The research recommended that the traditional religious way of fishing out their sponsors would be more effective, and the paper summed up that the soldiers fighting the war need African traditional science to fight and protect themselves.

**Key Words:** Indigenous knowledge, Boko haram, template, soldiers

### **Development, Types, Causes and Effect of Criminality and Violence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Nigeria**

One cannot boldly say that there was no criminality and violence before the amalgamation of an entity called Nigeria. Still, they were properly checked through an institution called to check and balance, and indigenous methods were also used in bringing the duo to a minimum as there is no angelic society in the world. In Nigeria, however, criminality and violence went to the extreme at the exit of the colonial masters. When elections were first conducted between 1960 and 1964<sup>1</sup>. Subsequent polls conducted from 1964/65 have been desperately marred by electoral violence, which exposed the country as a crisis zone. Desperate politicians with ulterior motives have constantly used thugs to disrupt elections. Many of them, through crisis, have won elections because they feel that they are wealthy and could use their wealth to win elections without the primary will of the people.

Historically speaking, before the said dates, there were riots in the 1920s to 1960, like the Aba Women riot and some pockets of riots in Northern Nigeria. There was another dimension of violence between the 1970s and early 1980s. The civil war of 1967 and 1970 recorded many casualties, too, but individualistic perceived crimes to a different shape in the late 1970s and early 80s<sup>2</sup>.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria Context, criminalities and violence are now in different phases. For instance, stealing of public funds, destruction of oil pipelines, burning of markets, oil bunkering, abduction and kidnapping, armed robbery, destruction of farmland, unending agitations, marital violence, cultism in schools at various levels, teacher/student crisis, examination malpractices, burning of independent electoral commission (INEC) offices, vote buying, political thugs and other electoral malpractices. The militants at the creeds are not excluded, human trafficking, extra-judicial killing, cyber-crimes, raping, insurgency, i.e. Boko Haram insurgency, which is the topic of discussion, drug trafficking, importation of fake drugs, sale of expired consumables, unnecessary murder, drug abuse, abortion, religious crisis, destruction of places of worship.

It is important to note that people do not only do these for fun; there are several factors responsible for the above-listed crimes. For instance, the major problem is economic interest, which is the primary cause of the various crimes is the major problem. Individuals elected to occupy political space are only interested in their pockets. They gather wealth for themselves and the unborn generation, plunging the country into economic crisis. If the politicians were sincere enough, our commonwealth wouldn't have suffered so much neglect as it is today. If the allocation to every state is sincerely spent, poverty will not be the subject of the day and suicide, which is rampant today, will be mitigated. Unemployment is another major problem: Many graduates have joined thuggery and armed robbery because they have no hope. In fact, the ones who are computer literate are now exposed to internet fraud. Although most are lazy, they do not want to start "low"; they want to become millionaires overnight. One can also argue that laziness is the major cause of this as the government cannot be held responsible for their reprehensible act. Christianity and Islam (the two major foreign religions) have also contributed to the ember of violence currently experienced in Nigeria. Many sects have sprung up to give room for religious particularism. Christians believe that their religion is the only way salvation can be obtained, while Muslims believe that their religion is authentic. These claims are pushing African culture to extinction. The African way of life, which was once respected, has been hijacked by these foreign religions. The issue of particularity has, therefore, given room to the formation of various sects, interpreting scripture to suit their reprehensible act.

### **Activities of Boko Haram Insurgency Since Inception**

The Boko Haram group has been a threat to the unity of Nigeria. They have indulged in kidnapping, maiming, bombing, and killings and have succeeded in terrorising the northern part of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. They see civilisation as a poison to human existence. According to them, anything unIslamic is anathema; hence, they are out to fight for a just course. They have been consistent, intentional and violent since they came into the limelight. The belief is that civilisation is a bomb that will soon consume the whole world, particularly Nigeria.

Boko Haram members have been fighting vigorously, taking tens of thousands of lives. Many have been displaced through their activities, and the neighbouring countries have been affected. Some experts have argued that Boko Haram activities, including brutal attacks on schools, abductions of people, burning of villages and maiming people, are due to long-time political corruption in the region, religious tensions and longstanding widening economic disparity in Nigeria. It has also been argued that the use of heavily armed soldiers and policemen in the region has contributed to the group's non-stop attacks. They argue that heavily armed security men deployed in the region have continued to kill their members; hence, they have to retaliate each time they are attacked.

The Islamic militant group is found in the north eastern part of Nigeria, and its founder is Mohammed Yusuf, a famous Islamist Cleric from Borno State. He created the group in Maiduguri in 2002. When he started recruiting members, he aimed to build a fundamentalist Islamic state with the touch of Sharia Criminal Courts.

The movement's followers, called Yusuffiya, consist of northern Islamic students, clerics, and professionals, many of whom struggle to find work. While it is difficult to track the size of Boko Haram, U.S. intelligence officials have estimated that there are between four and six thousand hardcore militants. However, some analysts have said that the group's members could be seven times more than the figure above. It has also been argued that many of the group's fighters and victims are likely Kanuri Muslims, the largest ethnic group in Borno.<sup>4</sup>

Benson Igboin<sup>5</sup> posits that in the decade since Al-Qaeda, led by the late Osama Bin Laden, attacked America, the debate about the relationship between religion and politics has taken another dimension. The global Islamic terrorist networks and how they have successfully carried out their well-organised

operations against various global institutions have called for a sensitive debate on what constitutes the core values of Islamic extremism.

Running a documentary on the terrorist group, the British Broadcasting Corporation<sup>6</sup> affirms that the Islamic group (Boko Haram) has caused havoc in Africa's most populous country with the way they have been bombing various government institutions, assassinating innocent citizens and abduction of different kinds. One of the reasons for these deadly attacks is to fight and overthrow the government and create an Islamic State. If Boko Haram is to be critically examined, one would understand that it is a version of Islam which makes it "haram" or forbidden for the sect's adherents to partake in any political or social activity related to Western society. The popular belief among the group members is that non-believers are running the Nigerian state. This has nothing to do with whether the president is a Muslim or not. The group's official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awat: Wal-Jihad; in Arabic, this means "People that are committed to the propagation of the Prophets Teachings and Jihad".

To date, this group has not stopped bombing and abducting people. It has become extremely difficult to stop their dangerous activities because even some of the Law Enforcement Agents serve as their eyes and noses. That is why former President Goodluck Jonathan<sup>7</sup> publicly declared that there are Boko Haram members in the Army, Police and Civil Defence Corps. The President affirms that the insurgents intend to bring down the nation. Of a truth, they have succeeded in attacking army barracks, killing many officers, attacking military checkpoints, and the Nigeria Defence Academy, which is the base of the Nigerian army. The idea is first to attack the North Eastern part of the country, move to the country's centre, and then plan to bring down the whole country.

Since 2002, the government has been "purchasing sophisticated weapons" to confront the deadly group but has failed. Some of our leaders have become rich, using the money meant to purchase weapons for personal use. Some soldiers are lamenting on social media daily that the weapons in the possession of the terrorist group are much more sophisticated than their own, which has made a majority of them resign. The argument is that fighting Boko Haram with fossil weapons is an invitation to death. The commanders and leadership of the Nigeria Army are not divorced from the allegation: Many of them, after retirement, are still in court for "allegedly" siphoning money allocated to the ministry. The issue of corruption on the fences of both the civilians and military leaders has been the major issue Boko Haram is still breathing. Meanwhile, Boko Haram has been grossly misunderstood by some Christians who feel they are the major and focus of the attacks. This is not a statement of fact, as many mosques have been attacked. Again, what deserves our attention here is that some Islamic clerics have publicly embraced the activities of the deadly group. They argue that the terrorist group is fighting for the interests of the Muslims.

However, we need to clarify something about the acclaimed meaning of the name of the group of people who are committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. On many occasions, we have heard from the Muslims that Islam is a religion of peace, and the religion has not deviated from this belief. Why, then, is the group killing innocent people to achieve its aim? Why are they abducting and impregnating school girls in their custody? Why are they causing damage to government institutions? Who are they fighting for?

If indeed they are fighting for God, where in the Qur'an is it recorded that Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W) killed people before achieving his aim? If going to school is haram, why not abduct, warn the female students not to go to school and later release them without having intercourse with them? Why fighting and killing soldiers? From all indications, it appears that the formation of the sect is dressed and coloured in socio-political activities while masquerading under religion.

Our leaders have claimed they have tried their best using soldiers, the police and local hunters to combat the group. The Christians have continued to pray to God to eradicate the members of the terrorist group while the Muslims have unabatedly prayed for peace to return to the North Eastern part where the activities of the group have displaced many people. However, with these spiritual activities, the group seems to have gained international relevance; today, they are one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. Having tried these methods, there is no tangible record to show that the attack would stop anytime soon. Can we then look toward Yoruba indigenous knowledge for fighting and winning wars? Among the Yoruba, it is believed that crisis cannot be totally expunged in every human society. When a crisis erupts, the Babalawo (Indigenous priest) is consulted who in turn will make a case for sacrifice (ebo). In other words, peace becomes very important for a society to grow hence Ebo for a peaceful living is recommended before going through other process (es).

### **Ebo for Peaceful Living as Recommended by Ifa**

Every Ifa verse has an embedded ebo, and a trained Babalawo knows what to do. Therefore, the following list is by no means comprehensive. It is meant to be a snapshot of the basic things that are usually appropriate to the situations for which they are listed. Therefore, Ifa's recommended ebo, as pointed out during divination, must be adhered to strictly.

Ebo against fight, quarrel

Esu is one of the deities that can be called upon.

Choices:	Obuko	(Male Goat)
	Akuko	(Roaster)

Compulsory:	Liquor	
	Epo pupa	(Palm Oil)
	Obi abata	(Kolanuts)
	Orogbo	(Bitternuts) <sup>8</sup>

In the traditional Yoruba, despite the fact that people go to war with the traditional available weapons, they still offer sacrifices for safe journeys. The reason why they do that is that it is believed that they could be ambushed by the enemies; hence the following sacrifice is put in place:

### **Ebo for Irinajo**

Choices:	Igbin	(Snail)
	Ounje ate	(saltless food)
	Ileke Obatala	'Obatala's ileke
	It should be worn	
	The Ileke must be washed with Omin igbin (snail water)	
	Also, one's face may be washed	
	With omi igbin (snail water) and regular cool water.	

The above does not render the prayers of the Christians and Muslims useless. In fact, it could be used to complement their belief system.

The soldiers have often been ambushed and killed on their way to restore peace in the troubled areas. Unfortunately, we have some things that could be used to save their lives, but we ignore them because the two foreign religions have taught us to do away with them. This is the time we should use them before things get out of hand<sup>9</sup>

### **Indigenous Knowledge Connected with the Protection of Human Bodies**

Among the Yoruba, it is believed that not all misfortune can be traced entirely to sorcery or witchcraft attacks. It is believed that certain untoward and inexplicable happenings could be caused by nature or war. During such untoward, unfavourable, troublesome and disadvantageous happenings, the Yoruba

have different magic which are expected to safeguard the human body. One of the most important of these is **Owo** – honour or respect used especially during the time of war. A Yoruba man with powerful **Owo** does not fear the danger that comes with war. He fights fearlessly and becomes ruthless as the battle progresses. In fact, the fighter finds it difficult to experience bodily harm, and his enemies will start respecting him. The powerful **Owo** is prepared below:

- Ingredients:** Oba ikon (the king of white ants);  
two lobes of alligator pepper;  
broken calabashes
- Prescription:** Stand at a distance and let someone  
throw the broken calabashes at you.  
They will fall off before reaching you. Take  
two of these. Place one down, put the  
Oba ikon on it and the two lobes of guinea pepper.  
Cover this with another broken calabash. Tie it with white  
and black threads. Sew it into igba; (leather girdle)  
wear the igba around your waist.

Another type of magic is used to achieve invulnerability from gunshots, cutlass, sword and knife attacks. The people used these types of magic during war to defend themselves. One issue that must be raised here is that this magic is used solely during war. It is not permitted to be used in everyday situations.

However, people who use the magic of invulnerability are fully convinced that the bullets of a gun will be deflected on either side of them, or if they hit them, they will be flattered against their bodies and fall harmless to the ground. It is also believed that some people can make their guns infallible by the use of magic. In that case, if the charm is powerful, the magic of invulnerability will be neutralised. Other people say that magic can be nullified if the foe first turns the handle of the gun to the man who has the charm of invulnerability, before shooting<sup>10</sup>. One other magic that prevents bullets from penetrating one's body is taught as follows:

- Ingredients:** Twenty seeds of afola plant;  
twenty seeds of guinea pepper  
the lead of kataba (strong tobacco)
- Prescription:** Grind all together. Mix with ori (shea butter).  
To use, insert the ori into your anus. That day, no bullet can harm you.  
But it works for only a day after use. You must repeat the use anytime  
you want it to work<sup>11</sup>.

According to our respondent, if one wants to know whether the magic is potent or not, Insert the ori into the anus of a hen, tie it to a tree and shoot at it; if the magic is powerful, it will not penetrate the hen.

Among the Yoruba, the belief that one can make himself invisible by using magic has long been held, and to date, the belief has not been thrown under the carpet. The charm is used when one is surrounded by enemies. In the past, people did not use it for fun as it is strictly limited to warriors and hunters who were likely encountering some wild animals during their sojourn in the bush. But sorcerers can also use it to cause havoc by making themselves invisible to poison enemies' food or inflict harm on their perceived enemies. When it is used to avenge wrong done to an individual or used by a fellow to cause disequilibrium in the society, at that point, it becomes anti-people and this is not encouraged by the people.

Afeeri or isiju is the name of the magic of invisibility. Afeeri means "to make a fellow unseen" or something used to make one invisible while isiju means something used to make the eyes dull. Both

Afeeri and Isiju are used to make one invisible, but their effects are slightly different. Isiju is active for a short period of time. For instance, a fellow could use it to remove something from someone without knowing he has done anything. People will not see him because, at that particular point in time, it will appear as if their eyes are blocked, but if the fellow remains there for some time, the magic will lose its potency, and he will be caught. Again, it must be clearly stated that the magicians who specialise in using magic to entertain people, like the conjurers popularly known as onidan or alalupayida also use isiju in their conjuring acts.

During war, afeerii is more potent and actively useful, effectively reliable and powerfully used to prevail over the enemies. It is used to cover a long-distance unseen by those who constantly go to war. When one ties it on the neck and wears it around the waist, he can enter the enemies' camp without being recognised. Our correspondents affirm that very few people own isiju or afeeri, and only the elderly possess these magical objects. They know that if the young people generally know, they could use it to cause havoc in the society, so these two charms are carefully guarded from the prying eyes of the young ones. But when the elders are old and are ripe to join their ancestors, they quickly transfer the knowledge to their grown-up heir<sup>12</sup>.

The use of the magic of invisibility is not only popular among the Yoruba, many scholars have discovered it in some localities. For instance, Gelfand M. has detected similar belief among the Mashona<sup>13</sup>, and Evans–Prichard confirms the exact belief among the Azande<sup>14</sup> and S.F. Nadel<sup>15</sup>. However, Nsdel claims that the efficacy of “medicine” used to procure invisibility is fictitious. He arrives at this conclusion because he was told that the “medicines” potency is tied to the night before one’s eye is ready for sleep before the desired end and effect is achieved. What this suggests is that the medicine does not affect the physical form of man, but the spirit or soul of the one who falls asleep. This belief is alien to the Yoruba. The Yoruba hold that the magic can be effectively used during the day when the fire of war keeps burning unabatedly. Among the Yoruba, therefore, the following recipe shows how afeeri is used:

**Prescription:** Get ole inu ewure (the foetus or embryo of goat) the foetus of a sheep. Put three orogbo (bitter kola) in a dyepot where there is aro (infusion of indigo for dyeing). Do not let the dyer know this. Remove the bitter kola on the third day without letting people see you. Get the seed of sere (a calabash with a very long, thin neck) and one guinea pepper. Burn them into powder under a house where you cannot see the sky; use igi oaka (lecan: odiscus) (upaniodes; Sapindaceae) for fire – wood. You must be naked while you burn the ingredients. No one must participate in the preparation of the magic. Take some of the powder and drink it in eko (maize paste). Put some of the powder in asi waji (dyed cloth) tie the cloth with black and white threads sew it into igbadi (dyed cloth), tie the cloth with white and black threads. Sew it into igbadi (leather girdle) put rest of the powder in ado (a small gourd). Sew a black leather round the ado for hanging on the neck (ikoron) to use, recite the following incantation on both the igbadi (leather girdle) and the ikoron, and wear them.

Ewure kii gbe inu ole reran  
Agutan kii gbe inu ole reran  
Oju alaro kii to ale aro;  
Aloju ma reran ni ti sere  
Gbogbo okunrin, ki won maa ri mi,  
Gbogbo obinrin, ki won maa ri mi,  
Titi n maa fi lo,  
Titi n maa fi bo

The goat never sees from the embryo



The sheep never sees from the embryo  
 The eyes of the dyer never see the  
 Bottom of the dyer - pot filled with the infusion of indigo,  
 Having eyes without seeing is the fate of sere calabash;  
 All men, do not see me,  
 From my going,  
 Till my coming back<sup>16</sup>.

As powerful as this magic is, there are some fellows that can render its power useless. These are people with inner sight called Iriron. With Iriron, one can see something invisible to the naked eyes. The Yoruba science explained above is potent if properly used but while using them, one should be careful of sleeping with different women.

In summation, there wouldn't be any need to call for indigenous science if our leaders are using the money meant for the purchase of weapons appropriately. But one can also argue that the members of the Islamic sect have been caught severally with magic. That means that despite having sophisticated weapons, they still fall back to African science. Our soldiers must do the same, if government truly wants to wipe them off existence. The captured members of the sect must not be released, as most will still return to their vomit. The army generals found guilty of siphoning money allocated to the Ministry of Defense must also be punished. If all these are not well looked into, the terrorist group will expand in scope in ten years' time.

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